

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

SOCIAL ACTION AT GENERAL SYNOD

It is expected that the Council for Christian Social Action will offer resolutions on three issues for study by the churches, conferences and synods this coming spring, and that these three issues will be put before the General Synod when that body meets in Philadelphia in June and July. The resolutions will have to do with: Race Relations, International Relations, and Agricultural Migratory Labor. They will be published as a supplement to the March issue of CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

The Council will look to the churches for their comments before May 15. Formal action of the synods and conferences should be reported to CCSA within five days after their meetings for consideration by the Council and by the General Synod's Review Committee.

Since it will be necessary for the CCSA to study reactions to the resolutions before they are placed before the Review Committee local churches are asked to plan now to study the statements in March or April. Orders for extra copies of the supplement to the March issue of CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY should be sent to the CCSA offices very soon. The price will be 5c a copy.

Report From Biloxi

By Richard P. Ellerbrake

With humble awareness that there is room in the Christian community for divergence of conviction, the following represents the author's approach to the problem of witnessing in a segregated society.

Sometimes feeling like a "cock-eyed optimist," I usually contemplate the witness of the church in way-down-south-at-the-mouth of Mississippi with something less than despair.

Biloxi is the scene of the most violent racial strife thus far in this State, which is generally conceded to be the least progressive in the Union and the heart-beat of that neo-Fascist group, the White Citizens' Council. Here the Board of National Missions conducts a "special ministry" known as Back Bay Mission.

Neighboring Louisiana, recently engaged in tragic-comic legislative frenzy in an effort to block integration of two public schools, nevertheless in September's presidential election had the sound judgment to vote the unpledged elector bloc a poor third, after the Democratic and Republican electors.

The depth to which Mississippi's legislature someday may go can be inferred from the fact that the unpledged electors here won hands down over both major parties. Biloxi, on the "Golden Coast," stayed true to the Democratic party. Yet a staff writer from the astute *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* headlined his report on the Biloxi beach riots, "Worst to Come in Biloxi."

Where, then, are the rays of sunshine? I believe they can be best seen in the prophetic witness of the church.

Lines of communication. Shortly after the riots, seven white and colored ministers met at Back Bay Mission to discuss matters of mutual concern (the meeting was called weeks earlier). We are convinced the Holy Spirit was with us. Tears came to our eyes as we realized how evident was the "rightness" of such a meeting. We stand convicted for not establishing this bridge earlier. It is the

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Concerning Farm Workers

By Julian Keiser

One of the major human economic problems of our time is farm labor. It could be unfair to indict farm employers as a whole. They too are often victims in a situation in our modern society in which it has become increasingly difficult for the small farmer to make a living, partly because today we can produce enough food and to spare, with huge surpluses, with half the number of farmers we now have. Price supports have helped the farmers, especially the big corporation farms, at tremendous cost to American tax-payers. Farm laborers have a low annual income that additional monies go to support health and welfare services for farm worker's families, made necessary by inadequate wages. The increasing use of Mexican Nationals (*braceros*) has given the big farms more mobile work force which helps farm owners, but keeps domestic farm worker's wages depressed and puts more of them out of work during half of each year. The machinery of government finds

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Race Relations Sunday

February 12 is the date that has been set aside as Race Relations Sunday in 1961. The theme for this 31st annual observance is, "Let Love Be Genuine." A Race Relations Sunday Message has been prepared by Dr. Kyle Haselden, Managing Editor of *The Christian Century*. It is being distributed by the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations of the National Council of Churches through denominational agencies.

There is scarcely another issue on the national or world scene which is more vital than the relationships, or the lack of them, that prevail among the various races of mankind. Local churches will do well to make creative use of Race Relations Sunday to expose themselves to the problems that exist and to the solutions that are offered in Christian love and service. There is always, of course, the possibility that a one day observance can be a passing gesture, sterile in consequence. It is not likely, however, that contemporary history will permit such luxury to abide very long. Men either participate in history or become its victims.

Observe Race Sunday

This is how one local church observed Race Relations Sunday last year. Brecksville Congregational Church, Brecksville, Ohio, reports as follows:

(1) For the morning service the minister, the Reverend Vernon H. Holloway, chose as his sermon topic, "The Need for Christians in Race Relations." Dealing with the problem as it is most evident in this all-white suburb, he announced that "open occupancy" pledge cards would be available for those who wish to sign. These pledge cards, prepared by the Metropolitan Cleveland Committee for Democracy in Housing, state a willingness to "welcome into my neighborhood any law-abiding and responsible person of whatever race, religion, or national origin . . ."

(2) Copies of the booklet, *Mission in Brotherhood*, were placed in the pews, and the congregation was urged to take them home for study.

(3) Sunday evening, the Senior High Pilgrim Fellowship and the Christian Social Action Committee jointly sponsored a program on "Fair Employment Practices in Ohio." Mr. Frank Baldau, the recently appointed executive director of the new Ohio Civil Rights Commission, spoke on the work of the Commission.

(4) Two enthusiastic PF'ers spent the weekend at an Ohio Conference PF seminar on "Progress Against Prejudice" at Mt. Zion Congregational Church in Cleveland.

Comments from the congregation on the program were varied, as was expected. The reports from the two young people who attended the Mt. Zion Seminar indicate they enjoyed a stimulating weekend at an Ohio Conference PF deep feelings about prejudice with the other white and Negro delegates.

The pointed treatment of the sermon topic disturbed some of the congregation. Others indicated a willingness to sign the pledge cards. In any case the problem has been brought to the forefront, and many people have been exposed to the idea that this community cannot maintain its racial exclusiveness forever. For many, the question has moved from "if" to "when," changing thought and discussion from "how to prevent it from happening" to "how to adjust to what is inevitable and right," and for a few, "how to effect a peaceful integration."

Summer Institutes

Dates have been set and initial plans roughed out for the 1961 edition of the summer Christian Social Action Institutes. The schedule of times and places is as follows:

Blue Ridge Assembly of the YMCA, Black Mountain, North Carolina—June 19-23

White Memorial Retreat Center, Mill Valley, California—June 19-23

Lakeland College, Sheboygan, Wisconsin—July 10-14

Massachusetts Congregational Conference Center, Framingham, Massachusetts—July 24-28.

A major consideration at all institutes will be "The Family and Rapid Social Change." Other topics include "Next Steps Toward Racial Equality," "Jewish-Christian Relations," "Justice and American Abundance," and "The United Nations Confronts New Problems." Sessions on practical application and social action strategies will also be part of the program. Competent people in each field are being secured to serve as speakers and resource leaders. Social action committees on all levels should take note of the institute dates in their areas and make plans to be represented. The cost of each institute is \$30.

A new feature of the institutes this year is that one course of special interest to pastors will be offered, with a parallel course for lay people. The Council is also exploring the possibility of an institute for youth some time in August.

FIELD WORK

In the four week period between October 22 and November 18 Field Secretary F. Nelsen Schlegel met with twenty-one different groups in Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota. In all three states the meetings were planned by committees made up of representatives of social action committees in the three state conference and in the three synods in these same states. Fifteen of the meetings were held in Congregational Christian Churches; six were in Evangelical and Reformed centers. In most places participants came from both CC and E&R congregations.

In all of these meetings particular attention was given to programs of Christian social action in local communities.

NCC Calls For Action

The Fifth General Assembly of the National Council of Churches, meeting in San Francisco, December 4 to 9, took a number of significant steps in the area of Christian Life and Work. It adopted strong statements supporting the right of migrant and seasonal agricultural workers to organize for collective bargaining; calling for compliance with Federal court orders in the New Orleans school crisis and commending citizens who at great personal cost stood for human dignity and justice; urging abolition of existing racial discriminations in employment; and proposing the use of agricultural surpluses and technical knowledge not only to feed the hungry but to improve the economic condition of a needy world.

On the violence in Louisiana, the Council said:

The General Assembly of the National Council of Churches expresses its prayerful concern for all the people in New Orleans in their present difficulty, especially those who are suffering agony of spirit by maintaining their loyalty to religious and democratic convictions in the face of rising hysteria and mob violence.

We commend ministers, rabbis and priests, children and their parents such as the Reverend Lloyd Foreman and Mr. and Mrs. James Gabrielle who, at great personal risk and sacrifice, have stood firm in the Judeo-Christian and historic American traditions which uphold the dignity and worth of every individual, without regard to race or color.

We further commend those officials, teachers and other citizens who have sought to keep the public schools functioning in accordance with law.

We urge the ministers and churches of New Orleans to make a vigorous Christian witness to the dignity and worth of the person as a child of God; to combat discrimination based on race, color, religion or national origin and endeavor to establish practices assuring equality of opportunity.

We further urge the State of Louisiana and the City of New Orleans to bring their policies and practices into accord with the dictates of Christ-like conscience and the laws of the land.

Of special importance, too, was the election of Mr. J. Irwin Miller, of Columbus, Indiana, as president of the National Council. Mr. Miller, a member of the Disciples of Christ, president of the Cummins Engine Company and active in the management of other enterprises, is the first layman to hold this office. He has distinguished himself for his liberal spirit and understanding of social and economic questions as well as his informed churchmanship.

Report From Biloxi

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ly bridge other than the informal, personal one, which is fast becoming hazardous to travel. Despite threats, these meetings have continued and expanded.

Public Stand. As expected, my appointment to the State Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights brought vitriolic criticism. So did my objection to the grant of \$20,000 of state funds to the Citizens' Council, a private organization. Unexpectedly, half the fan mail was commendatory! Constant opposition to the Councils and the wide-spread radio and newspaper coverage given to this opposition may have helped prevent the strong organization of the Councils in this area. Chicken pox is not all that's contagious!

Personal encouragement. Recently the *United Church Herald* wondered how many folks pass churches by because of lack of quality in church music. What about lack of quality in witness? Some searching souls turn up in our worship simply *because* the Word is proclaimed and applied to all facets of life, including the social. Their eagerness to be released from the loneliness occasioned by their convictions is at once pathetic and inspiring. Surely the church owes these individuals more than we usually give them.

Youth. How good God is to give us the youth! Inherently sensitive to what is fair and just, these young people are our hope! In a larger measure than their parents, some of them are able to understand the story of the Good Samaritan. Our experience is that when given an alternative to bigotry, they rise to the challenge.

By and large our people continue to hear the Word and receive the Sacrament. To be sure, we have lost some from the Fellowship. It is perhaps too harsh to say that we operate on the reduction theory, or we too like to show a "net gain for the Lord." Yet there is scriptural basis for paraphrasing the wag, "there is no congregation in which a few well-placed losses wouldn't improve the situation!"

Back Bay Mission includes Negroes in part of its community center program: the social welfare program and thrift shop. Yet the congregation and Center have been interracial for months (Asians), and this is a step forward.

Yes, there have been threats: to bomb and burn the church and to do personal harm. Several times friends and church members urged me to send my wife out of the state. The noble tradition of elevating the vice-president of the Biloxi Ministerium to the presidency of the

Concerning Farm Workers

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itself in a situation of having arranged a treaty with Mexico for Mexican National farm workers to meet a war-time shortage, and continuing it at double the number of imported workers in a peacetime situation of over-production and domestic farm worker unemployment, of spending vast sums of money and utilizing federal and state employment services to help the growers at the expense of the tax-payers, and in the process of increasing the tragic plight of domestic farm workers—the lowest paid and most helpless group in our otherwise prosperous economy.

Christians, whether farm employers or otherwise, need to study the facts, recognize that there are many regional differences in wages and the cost-price situation, but consider the total problem as it affects the farm workers and their families, as well as its effect on the growers and the consumers.

Scientific farming, the growth of large corporation farms, the increasing control of the whole production and distribution process by intermediate organizations, government price supports, the importation of *braceros* in competition with domestic workers, and many abuses of federal and state regulations have created a crisis situation in agriculture which cannot be easily solved. The growers are well represented by strong lobbies in our State legislatures and in Congress. The farm workers are completely without social status, without organization, without any influence in the power structure.

Christians, concerned with the fair treatment of all segments of our society and with special concern for human persons—especially those who are helpless, unorganized, and "the least of these" in our economy of abundance, cannot turn aside from responsible participation in the solution of these problems. Let us express some Christian social responsibility, look into this matter thoroughly, and then act as our Christian conscience tells us we must.

The above article, written by the Minister of Social Action for the Congregational Conference of Southern California and the Southwest, is taken from *The Stimulator* of which Mr. Keiser is editor.

group was broken this year because, as the new president was informed, "this is a fellowship, not an action, group!"

Our prayer is simply that God may continue to guide us, and if He pleases, help us to be a little leaven in this flat land!

Mr. Ellerbrake is pastor of St. Paul's Church, Biloxi, Mississippi.

SOCIAL ACTION CALENDAR

- January 15-20—Church and Economic Life Week.
- January 27-29—Council for Christian Social Action. The Inn, Buck Hill Falls, Pa.
- January 31 - February 2—Seminar on the Christian Farmer and His Government. (Write to Rev. Serge F. Sammon, 19 S. LaSalle St., Chicago 3, Ill.)
- February—Month of Emphasis on Christian Social Action.
- February 7 - 10—Churchmen's Washington Seminar, Washington, D. C. (Congregational Christians should write to Dr. Ray Gibbons, CCSA, 289 Park Ave., South, New York 10, N. Y., Evangelical and Reformed to Dr. Huber Klemme, 2969 W. 25th St., Cleveland 13, Ohio.)
- February 12—Race Relations Sunday.
- February 19-26—Brotherhood Week.
- June 19-23—Southern Christian Social Action Institute, Blue Ridge Assembly Grounds, Black Mountain, North Carolina.
- June 19-23—West Coast Christian Social Action Institute, White Memorial Conference Center, Mill Valley, California.
- June 19-30—Race Relations Institute, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee.
- June 20 - August 9—Africa Study Tour. Information from Rev. Herman F. Reising, 289 Park Avenue South, New York 10, New York.
- July 10-14—Midwestern Christian Social Action Institute, Lakeland College, Sheboygan, Wisconsin.
- July 24-28—Eastern Christian Social Action Institute, Congregational Christian Conference Center, Framingham, Massachusetts.
- July 24 - August 13—Caribbean Study Tour. Information from Rev. F. Nelsen Schlegel, 2969 West 25th St., Cleveland 13, Ohio.

Ohio Youth Tour South

Last June six young people and their minister from the First Congregational Church of Mount Vernon, Ohio, spent nine days in the South studying integration. The group first visited Nashville where, under the guidance of CCSA Board Member Clyde Flannery, they met with leaders in the sit-in movement and talked with AMA Race Relations Secretary Herman Long about the general integration picture.

Several days were spent in New Orleans where the young people were guests of members of Central Congregational Church. A meeting was held at Dillard University with some local clergymen and members of the Dillard faculty, to discuss integration in New Orleans.

Atlanta, the last stop on the tour, gave the group an opportunity to become acquainted with the student leaders of the non-violent movement there. On their last night here the young people attended a rally for Negro High School graduates to introduce them to the non-violent program.

A NATIONAL CRISIS

By Rudolph W. Raber

With relentless regularity history records the rise and collapse of scores of nations. Considering this, one cannot help but reflect on what some future generation might see concerning the decline and fall of the United States of America. The prospect is not a pleasant one but the degree to which we "enjoy safety" in any area of our temporal life is related to a realistic awareness of the ills that could and do beset us.

Certainly there are always multiple factors involved in a national demise. Economic collapse, internal disunity, political degeneration and military conquest often combine to force the final crash; but not before the moral structure is eaten hollow by what the Old Testament Prophets indelicately described as the "whoredoms of the people." That is, the refusal or the inability of a people to live up to their highest principles which prophetic interpretation would see as their Divine Calling.

What could bring about the death of a nation—one "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal"? Simply the refusal or inability of its people to live up to

that principle! Denial of the smallest right of the least citizen is enough to light the pyre of democracy. School boycotts, housing restrictions and segregationist mobs in the streets are the dance of death around that pyre already ablaze. Matters of human relations across racial and cultural lines have been left too long among the niceties of our society—things that would be nice to have—"providing"—and—"at such time as . . ." Yet all the while there has worked in the vitals of our nation this fester of discrimination and inequality, as deadly as any cancer rotting the lung.

What shall a man give for the life of a nation? Many have died for it and many more indicate their willingness to do so. A nation also needs people to live for it; to live with loss of pride, with loss of their self-defined "rights," with the gain of love.

As things now stand the United States of America is engaged in a struggle for its life. Not with communism or fascism as such, but with its own high principles—and with God. If the struggle is abortive some future historian may well conclude that the American dream was premature. Its people could not abide to live outside of an incubator.

Minneapolis IFHP Enters Second Year

The Greater Minneapolis Interfaith Fair Housing Program entered the second year of its three year project with an impressive list of accomplishment. Under the leadership of its executive secretary, Mr. James A. Tillman, Jr., and a Board of Directors chaired by Mrs. Louise W. McCannel, the Program has been directed at establishing fair housing practices for minority groups in the Minneapolis area. The Council for Christian Social Action is a partner with the Board of Directors in the Program.

In addition to helping in the stabilization of a number of neighborhoods where integrated housing has begun, the Program has continued to work with majority and minority families within the buyer-seller context. Statistics show that the number of homes available in hitherto closed Minneapolis neighborhoods is increasing.

A substantial amount of the work of the IFHP has gone into the gathering and collating of study data relating to minority group housing. Such material will be useful as other communities across the country move toward integrated housing in the future. Mr. Tillman has already lent his experience and counsel to interested groups in several eastern cities. A limited number of such consultations are possible over the next several years. Inquiries should be directed to either the Reverend Mr. Galen R. Weaver of the New York office, CCSA; or to the Reverend Mr. Chester L. Marcus, Cleveland office.

Secretary To Return

The Reverend Chester L. Marcus, secretary for Racial and Cultural Relations, will return to assume his duties with the Council for Christian Social Action in January. The Reverend Mr. Marcus has spent the past year working with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana in an arrangement with the Board of International Missions of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

During his stay in Africa he has taught in the Teachers College at Ho, spoken to churches and church groups and for a short time served as administrator of the Hospital in Adidome. He has also visited with Dr. Albert Schweitzer at Lambréne and spent a short time in the Congo. Young Lee Marcus accompanied his father to Ghana.

Much of the Council's work in racial and cultural relations has been carried on by the Reverend R. W. Raber who has served as part time acting secretary during Mr. Marcus' absence. Mr. Raber will return to his full time pastorate at Hough Avenue Church in Cleveland where Mr. James Mengel, student at Lancaster Seminary, has served as interim assistant minister for the past year.

Consult On Anti-Semitism

Several hours of a recent meeting of the Committee on Racial and Cultural Relations of the CCSA were given over to a consultation on the fact and nature of anti-semitism. Participants in the discussion were Rabbis Arthur Gilbert, Arthur Hertzberg, and Morris Kertzer; Miss Judith Herschopf, Professor Reinhold Niebuhr, and Dr. Allyn Robinson. The group probed some of the points of tension in Jewish-Christian relations and attempted to define the real issues involved, both in historical and contemporary terms.

Among the conclusions reached were that negative feelings of long standing have served to obscure the many great areas of heritage and concern which Christians and Jews have in common. More practically it was pointed out that much can be done in all levels of church and synagogue education to offset prejudices and to develop mutual understanding. The two groups share common concerns over numerous social problems on which they not only agree but could work together. The Committee on Racial and Cultural Relations is presently defining strategies for work and programs in the field of Jewish-Christian relations.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY JANUARY, 1961

News and Program Service of the
Council for Christian Social Action
of the United Church of Christ
Ray Gibbons, Director

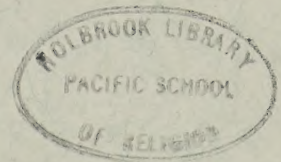
Huber F. Klemme, Associate Director and Editor

Sent free to pastors and social action committee chairmen. Group subscriptions, 10 or more to one address, 50 cents each. Individual subscriptions, \$2 per year with SOCIAL ACTION upon request.

General communications and orders from Evangelical and Reformed churches should be addressed to the Editor, Council for Christian Social Action, 2969 W. 25th St., Cleveland 13, Ohio.

Congregational Christians should order from Council for Christian Social Action, 289 Park Avenue South, New York 10, N. Y.

The Council for Christian Social Action unites the work of the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.



United Church of Christ
COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION

289 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK 10, NEW YORK • GRamercy 5-2121

February 1, 1961

Dear Friends:

We who have signed this letter believe in our Council for Social Action. In its twenty-six years of work with and for our churches it has grown steadily wiser and stronger. We are impressed by the willingness of the staff to serve in all kinds of situations, from small local churches to important places of leadership in the National Council of Churches. We are told that direct requests for assistance and advice now come in such numbers that the staff is in danger of losing its reputation for prompt response.

Do you, who read this letter, need to be convinced that a really great effort is now needed to provide Christian insights and influence in dealing with the almost overwhelming social problems of our time? We in the churches have been long on goodwill and good attitudes but terribly short on practical and effective action in the area of citizenship. We must do better. The CSA is helping us to do better.

The list of CSA activities is long. Let us mention only three. 1) SOCIAL ACTION magazine is increasingly recognized as one of the very best of all Christian periodicals dealing exclusively with social problems. 2) In the field of race relations, the CSA has not only blown a trumpet, it has provided expert analysis. And now, for the second year, it is helping to underwrite a large share of the cost of the Minneapolis Fair Housing Project, which may set an example to other cities. The project was initiated by the Council for Christian Social Action of the United Church of Christ. 3) On behalf of better international relations, thousands of people have been given a chance to profit from first-class seminars, in New York and elsewhere. In this area, it is a pity that the budget permits the employment of only one secretary.

(Next page)

Uniting the work of the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches
and of the Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

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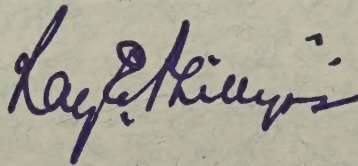
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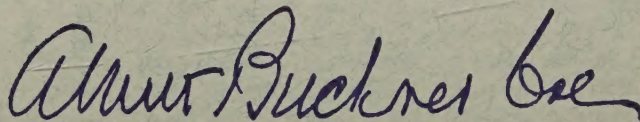
February is the month when our denomination permits the CSA to approach its friends with a special appeal for financial support. We think there are thousands of people in our churches who do not want to limit their support of the CSA to the small percentage of their regular benevolence giving that the CSA receives. We hope you are one of them.

We invite you to join with us in a practical expression, first, of your conviction that Christians have by no means made their full contribution to peace and justice and, second, of your belief that the CSA must be strengthened for even better leadership.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ray E. Phillips". The script is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

Ray E. Phillips

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Albert Buckner Coe". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a long, sweeping underline.

Albert Buckner Coe

